



NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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FCC ASKS FOR INFORMATION ON WIRELESS SERVICES IN RURAL AREAS

Washington, D.C. – In its efforts to promote wireless services in rural America, the FCC today sought comment on the effectiveness of regulatory tools it currently has in place to facilitate the delivery of wireless service to rural communities across the United States. The Commission's Notice of Inquiry asks whether the Commission should modify its policies to promote the provision of more spectrum-based services in rural areas, what types of wireless services are being provided in rural areas, and what obstacles exist to the provision of wireless services in rural areas. The Commission also asked for input on the extent to which rural telephone companies, and others desiring to serve rural areas, have opportunities to acquire spectrum for this purpose.

The Commission also requested comment on the effectiveness of several specific policies that are intended, in part, to encourage the provision of spectrum-based services to rural areas, such as: (1) small business bidding credits in spectrum auctions; (2) variation in the sizes of geographic service areas for spectrum licenses; (3) the availability of geographic partitioning and spectrum disaggregation arrangements with existing licensees; and (4) the use of construction benchmarks as performance requirements. In addition, the Commission asked whether, and in what ways, its technical and operational rules, band manager licensing, and unlicensed spectrum bands can be used to further the provision of wireless services to rural areas.

The information received will help guide future Commission decisions with respect to rural areas and rural service providers.

Action by the Commission December 11, 2002, by Notice of Inquiry (FCC 02-325). Chairman Powell, Commissioners Abernathy, Copps and Martin, with Commissioner Adelstein not participating, and Chairman Powell, Commissioners Abernathy, Copps and Martin issuing separate statements.

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